

Spring 2016 The Official Publication of the Lakewood Historical Society

Tracing Lakewood's Long Road to Cityhood



Opening the museum's latest exhibit. Deputy Mayor Jason Whalen, with Doug Richardson, Marie Barth, Paul Bocchi and LHS Pres. Becky Huber.



Among those viewing the exhibits she arranged and hung is Meg Justus, Museum Consultant (center)



City Manager John Caulfield does the cake-cutting honors.





Excellent turnout marked the February 27th Grand Opening of the Lakewood History Museum's newest exhibit. Placards and artifacts tell the story of a decades-long, often discouraging, but ultimately triumphant struggle to transform Lakewood from sprawling suburb into the second-largest city in Pierce County. The exhibit compliments the City's official 20th Anniversary celebration, held at City Hall on February 23rd (pictures from the celebration begin on page 6).

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PRAIRIE GAZETTE

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The staff of Prairie Gazette actively encourages input from the Society's members as well as the general public regarding story ideas of any other aspects of this newsletter, and the Lakewood Historical Society.

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MEETINGS

The Lakewood Historical Society formed in 1998 to preserve and share Lakewood's rich history through programs, displays and publications. The Society offers frequent programs on topics of historical interest. Most programs are free and open to the public. Visit us on Facebook or our website for information on events and activities:

www.LakewoodHistorical.org

President's Message

Other than the really bad wind storm a few weeks ago, we have skated by with a fairly uneventful winter. Now spring is upon us and we can enjoy the warmer weather and the colorful landscape.

The Society Board has been working at fever pitch in planning more great programs and events this year. I hope many of you were able to attend the City's 20th Anniversary Celebration kickoff in February. Another, even bigger event, is planned for Saturday, June 4th. The emphasis will be celebrating our future and our youth—lots of kids' activities, live music, and our first food truck rally!

Since the last newsletter, we are planning to add two new Board members. Ed Voie grew up in Lakewood, graduated from Clover Park High School in 1971 and attained a degree in Business from Pacific Lutheran University. Jim Curley, retired from the Army and Tacoma Public Utilities, will be rejoining the Board, mentoring with Gary Fowler as Treasurer. We have also added two new volunteers, Sharon Taylor and Yvonne West. The Board is moving forward in the process of contracting for a Museum Manager to help in the museum operation. All of this "new blood" will greatly add to the Society being able to accomplish our mission. We are still in need of volunteers. Won't you consider joining us? Don't hesitate to call me at 253-370-6676 to see how you can help.

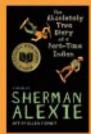
Becky Huber

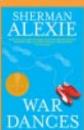
Pierce County READS Sherman Alexie

Poet, novelist, screenwriter...author chosen for the 9th Annual Pierce County READS. *The New Yorker* named Alexie one of the 20 top writers for the 21st century. "The world's first fast-talking, wisecracking, mediagenic American-Indian superstar"—*Men's Journal*. So much to give we couldn't choose just one book...

Five **Books**







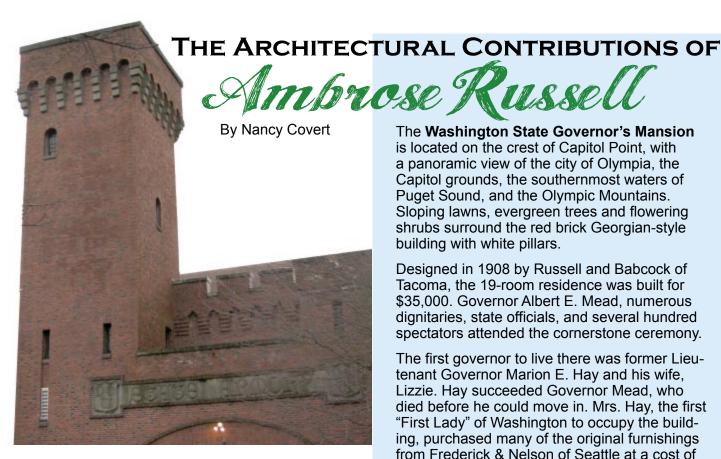




MEET SHERMAN ALEXIE—Friday, April 29 at 7 pm

McGavick Conference Center at Clover Park Technical College 4500 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood.

The Lakewood Historical Society is proud to be a sponsor of the Pierce County Reads program for the sixth year.



A recent News Tribune Sunday Sound Life feature article about the renaissance of the Tacoma Armory neglected to mention the background of that imposing, medieval structure that looms over the cityscape. The Armory (above), built for the Washington National Guard in 1908, was just one of many impressive structures designed by Ambrose Russell, who immigrated to this region in 1892.

Born in 1857 in India where his parents served as missionaries, Ambrose's mother died giving birth to his younger sister, Rhoda.

Russell attended the University of Glasgow, where he studied architecture. After graduation, he spent a short time working in Boston before joining former roommates from a stay in Paris, now living in Kansas City. There, his friends' wives introduced him to his future wife, Loella Janet Sargent. They married and moved to Tacoma where, after an unsuccessful attempt to establish himself as an independent designer, he became head architect for a local firm called the Cottage Building Company. The Russell's family home was located at N. 4th and M St.

Russell and his wife were the parents of **James** and Margaret Russell. James, who gained fame as a four-star Admiral, and Margaret, summered on American Lake in Lake City. Today one

The Washington State Governor's Mansion is located on the crest of Capitol Point, with a panoramic view of the city of Olympia, the Capitol grounds, the southernmost waters of Puget Sound, and the Olympic Mountains. Sloping lawns, evergreen trees and flowering shrubs surround the red brick Georgian-style building with white pillars.

Designed in 1908 by Russell and Babcock of Tacoma, the 19-room residence was built for \$35,000. Governor Albert E. Mead, numerous dignitaries, state officials, and several hundred spectators attended the cornerstone ceremony.

The first governor to live there was former Lieutenant Governor Marion E. Hay and his wife, Lizzie. Hay succeeded Governor Mead, who died before he could move in. Mrs. Hay, the first "First Lady" of Washington to occupy the building, purchased many of the original furnishings from Frederick & Nelson of Seattle at a cost of \$15,000. Some of the selections remain, notably the massive mahogany buffet, table, consoles, and eighteen chairs in the State Dining Room, and the grandfather clock on the staircase landing.

The mansion, though elegant, was not always a comfortable place in which to live. When the Daniel J. Evans family moved into the Mansion in 1964, its future was still undecided. Mrs. Evans coped with the same old defects that had faced her predecessors.

Many attempts were proposed during the years to raze the mansion. The last attack on the mansion came in the early 1970s when architects called the home "not architecturally wonderful, and not historically ancient." Governor Evans responded, "It's a lot more ancient than a new one would be." The decision was made to save the structure when the costs for a new mansion were estimated at two million dollars.

In 1973, \$600,000 was appropriated for remodeling and renovation. Nancy Evans established the Foundation for the Preservation of the Governor's Mansion the previous year. In 1988, the organization's name was changed to The Governor's Mansion Foundation.

Mrs. Joseph E Gandy of Seattle accepted the preservation committee's chairmanship. A preexisting master plan called for the use of furnishings of the period from 1780 to 1830.

GERRY AUSTIN

Great athlete. Great coach. GREAT PERSON.

By Tim Marsh, Lakes High Class of 1966

Gerry D. (for Dewey) Austin is best known for the outstanding football teams he coached at Lakewood's Clover Park and Lakes High Schools.

Gerry's middle name came from the S.S. Admiral Dewey, an American-flagged cargo and passenger steamship on which he was born Aug. 19, 1923, as it was cruising on the Pacific Ocean. His mother, **Mary**, was traveling to San Francisco to meet up with **Edward**, her husband and Gerry's father.

Gerry grew up in Kelso,
Washington, a lumber town, where he became
a Hilander—the nickname of the Kelso High
teams on which he played. The town had been
founded by a native of Kelso, Scotland; hence the
"highlanders" (spelling simplified).

Gerry excelled in a variety of sports and also in the classroom. Being a scholar-athlete served him well at Kelso High and in college. His career was not only as a successful coach and administrator but also as an excellent mathematics teacher.

As a Hilander, Gerry played football, basketball and baseball and competed in track. As a senior, he was named Cowlitz County "Athlete of the Year."

At Kelso High, Gerry and Lillian Lorraine Filla were sweethearts. They graduated in 1942 and married March 2, 1944, in San Francisco. They had been married almost 50 years when Gerry died at age 70 on January 28, 1994. Lillian passed away at 82 on June 18, 2006. Because Gerry was born at sea and he and Lillian enjoyed vacationing on Washington ocean beaches, they arranged to have their cremated ashes scattered on the ocean off the Washington State coast.

Gerry's athletic ability caught the attention of the University of Washington and he received an athletic scholarship to play football for the Huskies. The success Gerry would have with the UW varsity as quarterback/punter was foreshadowed in 1941 when he played for the Husky Pups



Coach Gerry Austin, from Clover Park High Klahowya yearbook.

freshman team. The Longview, Washington *Daily News* sports editor wrote that year: "Kelso's Gerry Austin is going to town in a big way and Washington coaches are high on the lad. He's been doing the kicking for the (freshman team (and a darn capable job of it, too)."

A newspaper preview of UW's 1943 Homecoming football game said Gerry was a "triple threat at the quarterback position" with his "speed, passing and punting" making him "a natural."

Gerry played Husky varsity football in the 1942, 1943, 1946 and 1947 seasons. In 1944-1945, during World War II, he served in

the US Navy on a minesweeper.

As a member of the 1943 UW team, he was the Husky quarterback and punter in the Rose Bowl game vs. the University of Southern California on January 1, 1944. Because of World War II travel restrictions, the game in Pasadena. California, had two teams from the Pacific Coast Conference competing. USC won, 29-0.



Coach Gerry Austin with assistants (I-r) Don Rarey and Chuck Forsland. From Lakes High Legend yearbook.

The 1947 "Apple Cup," UW versus Washington State football game, had a Kelso highlight. Played at UW's Husky Stadium in Seattle, it pitted former Kelso Hilander teammates as the starting quarterbacks, Gerry for the UW and

Tiz Miller for Washington State. UW won, 20-0. At Kelso, Gerry was QB and Tiz halfback. Both played in the 1947 game after World War II military service.

Graduating from the UW in 1948, Gerry was an assistant coach on the UW Pups football team that year and became Clover Park's head football coach in 1949. He coached Clover Park Warriors football for 13 seasons, 1949-1961 and also coached golf and taught math. Gerry was president of the Washington State Coaches Association, 1958-59.

In the days before high school football playoffs for state titles, special post-season "Turkey Day" games on Thanksgiving were the pinnacle of success. Gerry's 1957 Clover Park team was rated #1 in the AP prep poll.

Clover Park played in Seattle's "Turkey Day" 1957 game, losing on a muddy field in an upset by Seattle's Garfield High, 6-0. It was the Warrior's first loss of the season. Clover Park played in the game as Puget Sound League champs having scored 232 points in beating eight opponents. In 1959, Clover Park competed in the same game against the same opponent in Seattle, losing 13-7.

When Lakes High School opened in fall 1962, Gerry moved from Clover Park to become the Lancers' first football coach and athletic director, while also teaching math. Quarterback on his first three Lakes teams (1962, 1963, and 1964) was his son, Rick. Gerry coached Lakes football for six seasons (1962-1967) and retired for the first time from coaching.

Gerry returned to Lakes football in 1970 as an assistant coach. In that season, he was in charge of backs, and Lakes head football coach Andy Pazaruski handled the line.

After the 1970 season

Pazaruski was promoted to a district administrative post and Gerry took over as Lakes head coach for the '71 season. He then retired from coaching for the second and final time.

In Gerry's 20 seasons as a high school head football coach, he compiled an 118-53-8 win-losstie record. Warrior teams he coached won four Puget Sound League titles.

man," said Rick Austin. "He was kind, fair and honest, and he made everyone around him a better person. Dad worked very hard to be the best athlete and coach he could be, and he led by example."

"We all knew that we had to earn the right to be respected or to make the starting lineup. There were no favors given to individuals, even to me.



October 23, 1964. Coach Gerry Austin and his Lancers, having beaten the Clover Park Warriors, receive the Kiwanis Club trophy from Marion Oppelt, Lakewood Kiwanis Club president. Lakes Legend yearbook photo.

Gerry stepped down as Lakes athletic director, and as a teacher, in 1974. He became the Clover Park School District athletic director in 1975, retiring from that position in 1981.

Gerry was enshrined in the Washington State Football Coaches Hall of Fame in 1986.

He was posthumously honored in 1996 as a member of the Kelso High Hilander Hall of Fame inaugural class. Representing him at the event were Lillian, son Rick (Lakes Class of 1965) and daughters Cathy (Lakes 1967) and **Joan** (Lakes 1971).

"In addition to being a tremendously successful athlete and high school football coach, my Dad was a good

his son, on the playing field. His positive manner of coaching taught us all many of life's lessons. Dad's numerous accolades were well deserved, but none of that recognition ever changed his humble, thankful nature. He was the rock of the Austin family, and he and Mom had a wonderful, supporting relationship."

Sources include the Tacoma News Tribune, Seattle Times, Longview Daily News, Clover Park High Klahowya, Lakes High Legend and Kelso High Tamahnawus yearbooks and an article in the Cowlitz Historical Quarterly by its editor, Bob Gaston. As a part of research, visits were made to the Lakewood Historical Society Museum and the Longview Public Library. The assistance of Rick Austin was invaluable.



20 Years of Cityhood



No celebration complete without a "groaning board" of goodies. This one has everything from turkey wraps to treats from the House of Donuts!



Kudos to LHS Secretary Sue Scott & Board Member Kirstin Davis for great work representing our Society.



Above:
Communications
Director Brent
Champaco tests
the audience's
knowlege of
Lakewood trivia.



Don Anderson (right)
endures good-natured
ribbing from ex-mayor
(now Pierce County
Council Chairman)
Doug Richardson.

Left: City of Lakewood Youth Council members stand to be recognized.



Former mayor (and first female African-American to hold that office in state history), Claudia Thomas.



Andrea Gernon, tireless advocate of cityhood in the days before incorporation, shares stories of her role in a long and arduous process.



Becky brings the evening to a close, inviting everyone to attend the grand opening of the Museum's upcoming exhibit, "The Long Road to Cityhood". 7

Interviewing "Historical Phil"

by Nancy Covert

Someone once said "If you're going to move to a new place it's important to get acquainted with where you are, learn to like it and become part of the community."

Phil Raschke, who recently was honored as Lakewood's Volunteer of the Year, has followed that advice most of his life. He adds to that, saying "everyone should volunteer."



Find Historical Phil at 1180 AM on your radio dial.

"It's possible to trick the brain into thinking that it's much younger; hence it's easy to always be young," advises this man who's proof of that statement.

"The brain doesn't know how old it is," Historic Phil claims.

Phil Raschke, better known to Lakewood residents as "Historic Phil"—"frugal Phil" to his kids—is a many-faceted man, whose successes can be traced to that belief.

Whether you've encountered him at Lakewood

Playhouse where he serves on its Board of Directors, and sometimes in small production roles such as the popular annual Fall Radio Show, to his four years with his KLAY Radio program that features stories about local history, starting with the Hudson Bay days, to his role with Lakewood Arts Commission, coordinating The Asian Film Festival, emceeing the Black History month program, and lots more, Phil is a man who lives his beliefs.

A recent winter afternoon coffee house conversation attempted to zoom in on the essence of this man, but after an hour-long chat with him, there's much more to be discovered.

Plans for his up-coming trip to Mazatlan were foremost in his mind, as well as preliminary plans for a following visit to the Far East, the place where he'd served as a helicopter pilot in the late 1960s. Traveling, of course, is a part of

his enthusiasm, something he developed during his flying days. Since then, he's always wanted to go places, "Where is the next adventure; the next trip?"

Raschke's journey began in Illinois, near

Chicago, where he was born, but the family soon moved to California—a place he "didn't like much" that first year. Eventually, he adjusted to the new surroundings, and after graduation enrolled at Peppardine College, where he majored in History, focusing on American History, from 1860-1950 and Chinese history.

He enrolled in flight school next. After serving in Vietnam, where the best thing about that assignment was, "the people," (and where he also racked up 1,300 combat flying hours, a Purple Heart, two Vietnamese gallantry awards, 48 Air Medals and a Presidential Citation for Valor), he switched to flying for the Coast Guard Search and

Rescue—pausing for one anecdote about a hair-raising rescue off Vancouver Island.

And that doesn't even cover his theater experience, but that's a whole other story.



Semper Paratus! Phil Raschke, Search & Rescue team member, early 1970s

RUSSELL from page 3 of James' sons, **Donald**, resides on the west side of the lake.

At one time in the early 1900s, Russell taught correspondent classes, and one of his students. Emmanuel Bresemann of Spanaway, (who designed 24 schools around the State, including the Robert Gray School), designed Steilacoom School (now the Administration Offices for Steilacoom Historical School District). Both the Steilacoom School and the Lake City School—the latter designed by Russell—were dedicated about the same time.

While Ambrose is responsible for many Tacoma-area homes and buildings, Lake City Elementary, not far from Lake City Community Church, was the only school he ever designed. Built for \$13,000, the building was dedicated in 1916. A brief account of that structure's



The imposing entrance to Russell's Tacoma armory.

history is included in "American Lake Vignettes," a collection of essays about Lake City and Tillicum. Published by History Press of South Carolina, copies of the book are available at the Lakewood History Museum in the Colonial Center, 6211 Mt. Tacoma Drive SW.

Sadly, the building was recently demolished after suffering considerable damage earlier this year in a fire. A historic school bell hung in the cupola of the structure that, until December 2014, was used as the school's library.

But many of Mr. Russell's most impressive achievements remain; listed here are some of the most noteworthy in the region (**Peggy Mace Bal**, Ambrose's granddaughter, provided information about her grandfather's work in a Power Point production made in the early 2000s):

Immanuel Presbyterian Church, numerous North Tacoma-area homes, including the Rust Mansion; the Tacoma Armory where Margaret and James took riding lessons, the Perkins Building—home to the Tacoma Daily Ledger and the Tacoma Daily News, a monument to Tacoma Councilman Percy Norton (it's located near the Elks Club at 7th and Broadway), the 1908 Washington Governor's Mansion, The Masonic Temple on St. Helens St., The 1909 Tacoma Country and Golf Club, Christ Episcopal Parish Hall and Sunrise Inn at Mount Rainier.

PHIL, from previous page

His persona as "Historical Phil" has its roots in 1970 when he started doing small-time radio in Port Angeles while at the Coast Guard Air station.

"I kept doing it as a freelance thing until Historical Phil came along." In 1975 he earned a Master's degree in Communication from the University of Tennessee. From 1978 to 1982 he also edited the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* newspaper.

"The paper," he adds, "was printed in Tokyo but distributed through the Pacific." His editing work also included steering Fort Chaffee, Arkansas's award-winning "Helping Hands" publication. Phil, his wife, **Beverly**, a Registered Nurse from Charleston, S.C., (who've been married for 50 years) and their three children, settled in the Evergreen State where they've lived since 1982. Their three children graduated from Steilacoom High School, and the next generation of Raschkes is now in school, opening up more opportunities to stay involved.



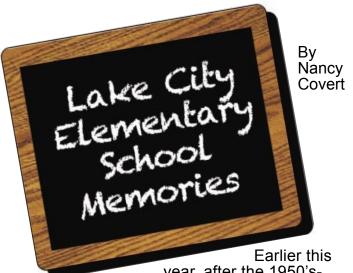
Until a few years ago Phil worked as Director of Marketing and Training for Morale, Welfare and Recreation at Ft. Lewis.

then local community activities became his next focus. He adds that when he received the Volunteer Award, he was "surprised and very honored."

"You have to get excited every day," he says, "volunteering is one way to do that."

"Historical Phil," sponsored by the Lakewood Historical Society, is broadcast at 9:30 a.m. M-F at 1180 AM, following the news. It also airs T-W-Th in the late afternoon—"the exact time depending on station schedule."

The program airs in pre-recorded three-minute segments and currently has 150 programs in the hopper. "Writing a historical story in three minutes, from beginning to end, is not an easy thing, but I have it down now," Phil adds.



year, after the 1950'sera Lake City Elementary School had been razed, bulldozers returned to knock down an adjacent 1916 brick school that had been designed by **Ambrose Russell** (see page 3), renowned early 20th century Tacoma architect.

Mr. Russell also designed the 1909 Tacoma Country and Golf Club known as the "Grand Old Lady", and many of Tacoma's civic buildings, as well as the Washington State Governor's Mansion and Mt. Rainier's Sunrise Inn.

"When the building came down I cried," said Janet Nauth, a former Lake City Elementary student.

The demolition of that older school affected a lot of its former students. A few walked by the building that held many memories for them. Some took photos, some gathered bricks from the 1916 building. "I'm a lover of history and buildings." Nauth added.

In 2006, a group of former Lake City Elementary students held a "class reunion" at the site. Janet (Lambert) Nauth, who attended the school from 1961-69, assembled a chronicle of old school pictures and newspaper articles for that event. Several former teachers, including Mrs. **Blackburn**, joined with their former students at

Standing in the old school's hallway during that gathering, Nauth experienced familiar school smells—old paper, paste, and who knows what other aromas lingered—that washed over her like diving into American Lake's cool waters.



Janet Nauth, "Reading First" tutor at Idlewild School

Janet's scrapbook, compiled from Clover Park School District archive materials, includes photos of the original 1890s wooden school, as well as photos of the contemporary buildings. In the 30s, the school operated a soup kitchen. One class photo (below) includes a goat. There also were photos of class plays and school festivities.

Half a dozen laminated newspaper articles, covering school stories from the 1950s to 2014, also are included in the collection.

"I had such a love for that school."

For those who miss the old school, Lakewood **Historical Society** is hosting a Lake City Elementary history display later this spring at its Mt. Tacoma Drive location in the 1937 Lakewood Colonial Center, where Lakewood's history is being saved because "local history matters."



that event.

LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Sponsors - Business Members and Donors

The Museum Annual Fund Drive and special fund raising efforts generated \$29,017 during 2015 in grants, business sponsorships and contributions from 185 individuals and families and 52 local business Sponsors

City of Lakewood Lodging Tax Funds help support and promote Lakewood History Society & Museum operations, educational programs, events, historical markers, community outreach programs, and Museum displays/exhibits.

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LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY FINANCIAL STATEMENT December YTD 2015

\$22,660 - Beginning Cash on Hand - January 1, 2015

Income

\$49,000 – Grants from Public Organizations & Private Foundations

\$11,512 – Memberships & Business Sponsorships

\$15,365 – Special Events & Annual Fund Drive

Expenses

\$27,565 – Administration, Operations, Museum Lease, Insurance & Maintenance

\$14.970 – Marketing, Publicity, Advertising,

Website & Newsletter

\$ 4,590 – Museum Displays & Exhibits

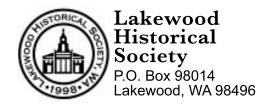
\$14,718 - Professional Museum Management

& Marketing Services

\$ 1,445 – Special Events and Fund Raisers

\$10,784 - Historical Markers

\$24,459 - Ending Cash on hand - Dec. 31, 2015



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Spring 2016 Programs & Events

Tues, April 26th, 7 pm- Life and Times of Ambrose Russell, at St Mary's Episcopal Church, 10630 Gravelly Lake Dr SW. Mr. Russell's great-granddaughter will share the accomplishments and photos of buildings this noted Tacoma architect has designed.

Tues, May 24th, 7 pm- Fort Lewis: Cold War to War on Terror, Lakewood City Hall Council Chambers, 6000 Main St SW. Alan Archambault, noted author and historian, will present his latest book published by Arcadia Publishing Company. The book will be available for sale with a book signing. Alan will also discuss the plans for Joint Base Lewis McChord's commemoration of the Centennial of Camp Lewis in 2017.

Thurs, June 2nd, 10 am-1 pm-Senior Activity Center Open House, 9112 Lakewood Dr. SW, visit Society's booth, free drawings and refreshments.

Sat, June 4th, 1-6 pm-"Celebrating our Dynamic Future", Lakewood Towne Center, the City's second 20th Anniversary celebration, first Food Truck Rally, music by Afrodisiacs, displays, lots of activities for kids.

Tues, June 14, 10 am-3 pm-Lakewood Farmer's Market, Lakewood City Hall, 6000 Main St SW. Be sure to stop by the Society booth to participate in the trivia contest and drawing.

Find us on Facebook (Lakewood-Historical-Society-Washiington-State) or check our website for more information and current events: www.LakewoodHistorical.org